

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the present application. Claims 14-28 have been withdrawn from consideration leaving claims 1-13 for further prosecution on the merits. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 1-13 remain for consideration upon entry of the present response. No new matter was introduced by this response. Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of the claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,685,884 to Van Den Berg (hereinafter "Van Den Berg") for the reasons stated on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse for at least the reasons stated below.

The Examiner states that Van Den Berg teaches two ferrules in FIG. 1 as elements 300 and 304. The Examiner further states that Van Den Berg teaches a sensing element as element 310 in FIG. 1. Further still, the Examiner states that it would have been obvious to configure a recess to receive the sensing element [310] if in fact Van Den Berg does not expressly teach this limitation in order to secure and maintain the sensing element in place. (See page 2 of the Office Action)

However, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has mischaracterized the teachings of Van Den Berg. More specifically, element 310 is disclosed as an electrical processing unit at column 13, lines 16-17 and 35-37, while the sensing element is disclosed as a proximity transducer 10 in FIG. 1 and at column 12, line 64 -column 13, line 4. Further FIG. 1 illustrates elements 300 and 304 as opposing external threads extending from a cylindrical part of adaptor 292, which is surrounded by a rubber grommet 294. Column 13, lines 20-35. Thus, Van Den Berg does not teach or suggest a recess in the cylindrical part (adaptor 292 intermediate the two ferrules or external threads) receiving either transducer 10 or electrical processing unit 310 (e.g., the sensing element). Further, Van Den Berg teaches the external threads (ferrules) and the cylindrical part 292 therebetween defined by a same axis. In other words, an axis defining the cylindrical part between ferrules 300 and 304 of Van Den Berg also define the ferrules 300 and 310. Thus, the axis defining the ferrules 300 and 310 is not "offset" relative to an axis defining the cylindrical part therebetween.

It is also respectfully noted that the other similar Van Den Berg patents cited by the Examiner, i.e., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,712,562; 5,818,224; 6,072,312; 6,131,270; and 6,170,148, each disclose a sensing element coaxially received in a cylindrical part and coaxially attached to an extension cable. None of the cited Van Den Berg patents teach or suggest a first axis defining the cylindrical part having the recess to receive the sensing element being offset relative to a second axis defining ferrules extending from opposing surfaces of the cylindrical part and receiving the extension cable, thus defining an offset probe.

More specifically, Van Den Berg does not teach or suggest, either alone or in combination with other similar patents to Van Den Berg, a first and a second ferrule each extending from opposing surfaces defining an exterior of said cylindrical part, a first axis defining said first and second ferrules being offset from a second axis defining said cylindrical part; and an extension cable operably attached to said sensing element via said first and second ferrules, said sensing element being disposed offset relative to said extension cable, as in independent claim 1. Thus, claim 1, including claims depending therefrom, i.e., claims 2-13, define over the Van Den Berg patents.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection to claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

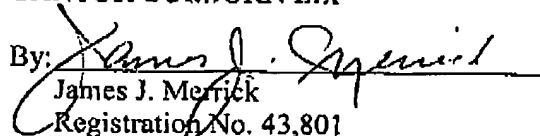
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicants' attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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